

Free/Reduced Fact Sheet: No Income

Households reporting \$0 income are eligible for free meals the following ways:

1. \$0 written next to household members

- a. If \$0, “zero” or “no income” is written next to the household members, the application must be approved for free meals based on face value.
- b. Flag this application to Verify for Cause.

2. Income fields left blank

- a. Schools must process applications when income fields are left blank and do not have a \$0, “zero”, or “no income” written next to the household members. The application must convey to the applicant that any income field left blank is a positive indication of no income and certifies that there is no income to report.
- b. Approve the application based on face value.
- c. Flag this application to Verify for Cause.

Tips for Verification for Cause

- Ask the household where are they living? How are they meeting their expenses?
- Schools can request additional written documentation or collateral contact corroboration to support the household’s situation.
- This might be a homeless situation, contact your school’s homeless liaison.

Additional Resources:

- [Verification for Cause Fact Sheet](#)
- [Eligibility Guidance Manual](#)

Eligibility Guidance Manual References

| Topic | Page Number |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Determining Household Reportable Income | 24-25 |
| Income to Include and Exclude | 26-33 |
| Reviewing Applications Based on Income | 60-63 |
| Verification for Cause | 99-100 |
| Verification When No Income is Indicated | 109 |